

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
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AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 0805

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, BG, IN
SUBJ: BORDER TALKS END

REF: DACCA 0711

1. TALKS BETWEEN THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE BANGLADESH RIFLES (BDR), MAJOR GENERAL Q.G. DASTGIR, AND THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE INDIAN BORDER SECURITY FORCE (BSF), ASWINI KUMAR, ENDED ON FEBRUARY 13 ON A CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC NOTE. THEIR DISCUSSIONS CENTERED ON THE SERIES OF BORDER INCIDENTS WHICH OCCURRED IN LATE JANUARY IN THE MYMENSINGH DISTRICT AREA. IN THE JOINT STATEMENT WHICH WAS ISSUED AT THE END OF THE MEETING, THE INDIAN DENIALS OF ANY COMPLICITY WERE REGISTERED: THEY ASSERTED THAT NO RPT NO MISCREANTS WERE BEING ALLOWED TO OPERATE FROM INDIAN TERRITORY AND THAT NONE WERE BEING GRANTED SANCTUARY ON INDIAN TERRITORY. RATHER, THE INDIANS COMPLAINED THAT GARO TRIBALS FROM BANGLADESH WERE ENTERING INDIAN TERRITORY. THE INDIAN FURTHER AVERRED THAT BANGALEE FIRE OCCASIONALLY
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WAS DIRECTED AT INDIAN TERRITORY, WHICH THE BANGALEES

AGREED COULD HAVE OCCURRED AS BDR FORCES FIRED ON MIS-
CREANTS FLEEING INTO INDIAN TERRITORY.

2. AMID THE CHARGES AND COUNTER-CHARGES, THERE WERE THREE MORE POSITIVE ELEMENTS TUCKED AWAY IN THE JOINT STATEMENT. FIRST, BOTH SIDES ACKNOWLEDGED THE NEED TO CREATE CONDITIONS WHICH WILL REDUCE UNAUTHORIZED MOVEMENT ACROSS THE BORDER, AN APPARENT REFERENCE TO THE GAROS AND THEIR PROBLEMS (SEE BELOW). SECOND, THE TWO SIDES AGREED THAT A JOINT INQUIRY TEAM, HEADED BY THE DEPUTY INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF THE BSF FOR THE SHILLONG AREA AND A DIRECTOR OF THE BDR, WILL BEGIN AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE INCIDENTS IN THE MYMENSINGH AREA WITHIN 15 DAYS AND THAT THEIR CONCLUSIONS WOULD BE READDIED WITHIN THE ENSUING 15 DAYS. LASTLY, BOTH SIDES AGREED THAT, IN CONSONANCE WITH AN AGREEMENT REACH LAST APRIL IN CALCUTTA, REGULAR MEETINGS, APPARENTLY INTENDED TO RESOLVE MINOR PROBLEMS LOCALLY, WILL BE HELD PERIODICALLY BETWEEN THE BDR AND BSF COMMANDERS OF WINGS AND SECTORS ALONG THE BORDER.

3. COMMENT: OFFICIAL BANGALEES HAVE TOLD US THAT THE MEETING WENT REASONABLY WELL, EVEN AFTER A SOMEWHAT UNPROMISING BEGINNING. OTHER BANGALEES, HOWEVER, WHO WERE NOT RPT NOT PRIVY TO THE TONE AND CHARACTER OF THE DELIBERATIONS, REMAIN TO BE PERSUADED THAT THE MEETING ACCOMPLISHED ANYTHING CONCRETE. THE VIEW OF THIS LATTER GROUP, WHICH REFLECTS THE MIND OF MANY, NECESSARILY VREATES A PROBLEM WHEN THE BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT SEEKS TO DEAL WITH THE INDIANS DISPASSIONATELY AND RATIONALLY. IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT GENERAL ZIA IS OCCASIONALLY DUBBED AS "PRO-INDIAN" SIMPLY BECAUSE, VIEWING THE WORLD REALISTITICALLY, HE KNOWS HE MUST TREAT WITH INDIA.

4. WE THINK THAT THE PROBLEM IN THE MYMENSINGH BORDER AREA IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE, ALTHOUGH VARYING IN INTENSITY, FOR HISTORICAL REASONS. THE AREA OCCUPIED BY THE GAROS WAS SPLIT BY THE 1947 PARTITION, A SITUATION WHICH INSURES THAT THERE WILL BE CROSS-BORDER MOVEMENT, NOT ALL OF IT SANCTIONED. COMPOUNDING THIS IS THE FACT THAT SOME GAROS WITHIN BANGLADESH TERRITORY HAVE APPARENTLY BEEN DIS-
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POSSESSED OF THEIR LANDS BY MUSLIM BANGALEES. IN RESPONSE, MANY WITHIN THIS GROUP HAVE CROSSED TO INDIA. THERE THEY ARE AVAILABLE FOR MANIPULATION BY ANYONE WHO MAY WISH TO EMBARRASS THE PRESENT BDG.

5. INDIA-BAITERS INSTANTLY CLAIM THAT IT IS THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT WHICH USES THE DISPLACED GAROS BUT SOME POSSIBLY MORE THOUGHTFUL OBSERVERS EXPRESS THE BELIEF THAT

THEY ARE INSPIRED BY MONI SINGH, HEAD OF THE ERSTWHILE COMMUNIST PARTY OF BANGLADESH (CPB), WHOSE HOME AREA AND POLITICAL BASE IS IN MYMENSINGH. MONI SINGH FLED BANGLADESH IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE AUGUST 15 OVERTHROW OF SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN AND IS CONDEMNEDLY THOUGHT BY SOME TO BE AMONG THOSE WHO, WHETHER IN BANGLADESH OR ELSEWHERE, ARE USING WHATEVER MEANS ARE AVAILABLE TO NUDGE THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT EITHER TOWARDS THE KIND OF POLICIES WHICH MARKED THE MUJIB ERA OR ELSE OUT OF POWER. IF THE GAROS ARE, IN FACT, BEING USED BY MONI SINGH OR THE CPB, THE QUESTION STILL AWAITING A MORE CERTAIN ANSWER IS THE EXTENT AND NATURE OF THE INDIAN ROLE.

6. THE PROBLEM OF THE GAROS IS REPORTEDLY RECEIVING THE BDG'S ATTENTION, AND WE ARE TOLD THAT NO TRIBALS ARE PRESENTLY BEING DISPOSSESSED AND, INDEED, EFFORTS ARE BEING MADE TO RETURN LANDS WRONGLY TAKEN FROM GAROS. ON THE OTHER HAND, AT LEAST ONE MISSIONARY SOURCE HAS TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER THAT SOME GAROS ARE STILL MISSING FROM THEIR AREAS, AND PRESUMED IN INDIA. IF THEY REMAIN RESTIVE AND CROSS-BORDER FORAYS CONTINUE, THE DANGER IS THAT THE BANGALEES MAY IN TIME BE TEMPTED TO ADOPT THE PRE-LIBERATION PRACTICE OF THE PAKISTANIS WHO PROVIDED SUPPORT AND SANCTUARY TO INDIA'S NAGAS AND MIZOS. BOSTER

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